

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8683

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

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EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR EAID SA ET

SUBJ: SAUDI INQUIRY ABOUT ADVISABILITY OF AID TO ETHIOPIA

REFS: (A) JIDDA 2183; (B) SEBASTIAN-FITIGU MEMCON OF 3/3/74

(NOTAL); (C) ADDIS 1599

1. EVER SINCE IEG BREAK WITH ISRAEL IN OCTOBER, IEG HAS BEEN NEGOTIATING DISCREETLY FOR SAUDI (AND OTHER ARAB) FINANCIAL AID. SUBJECT WAS RAISED DURING EMPEROR'S VISIT TO JIDDA IN JANUARY (REFTEL C), BUT ONLY DEFINITE DECISION TAKEN AT THAT TIEM, ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCES, WAS SAUDI GIFT OF ONE MILLION POUNDS STERLING FOR RELIEF AID. ACCORDING TO INFORMED MOFA SOURCE (REF B), HIM WAS SCHEDULED TO REVISIT JIDDA IN EARLY MARCH TO DISCUSS ADDITIONAL AID, BUT INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS INTERVENED.

2. IN SUBSEQUENT WEEKS, ARABS HERE -- NOTABLY EGYPTIANS AND SUDANESE -- HAVE INDICATED KEEN INTEREST IN FINDING WAYS FOR IEG TO MEET ITS FINANCIAL PROBLEMS. SEVERAL WEEKS AGO, EGYPTIAN COLLEAGUE INVITED EMBOFF TO DISCUSS IEG OPTIONS IN WAKE OF CURRENT DISTURBANCES. EGYPTIAN REVEALED THAT HIS EMBASSY HAD RECOMMENDED TO CAIRO SUPPORT FOR PAN-ARAB EFFORT TO AID IEG. IEG HAD INDICATED TO EGYPTIANS NEED FOR ONE BILLION ETHIOPIAN DOLLARS (ABOUT US\$500 MILLION). INTERESTINGLY, EGYPTIAN EMBASSY RECOMMENDATION BASED ON ITS ESTIMATE THAT RELATIVELY MODERATE REGIME LIKELY TO SURVIVE HERE, THAT ARAB SUPPORT WOULD AID ETHIOPIAN MOSLEMS TO ASSERT THEIR INTERESTS IN CURRENT FLUID SITUATION, AND THAT SUCH

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SUPPORT WOULD, OVER TIME, ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO LESSENING OF

ETHIOPIAN-SOMALI TENSIONS. WE HAVE LESS EXPLICIT INDICATIONS THAT SUDANESE EMBASSY HAS BEEN REPORTING TO KHARTOUM ALONG SIMILAR LINES.

3. SOMALI EMBASSY APPARENTLY AWARE THAT ARABS MARSHALLING FORCES IN SUPPORT IEG AND REPORTEDLY PROBING DEEPLY FOR DETAILS.

4. EMBASSY ASSUMES WASHINGTON WILL PREFER FRAME ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS PARA 3 AND 4 REFTEL A. AS FOR INTERNAL SITUATION, WE HAVE NOTHING TO ADD AT PRESENT TO OUR RECENT REPORTING. SITUATION HERE REMAINS FLUID. ENDALKACHEW CABINET STRUGGLING TO MAINTAIN ITSELF BUT, BY ITS OWN ADMISSION, STILL UNABLE EVEN BEGIN DEAL WITH NATION'S PROBLEMS (CF ADDIS 4560) AND PRESUMABLY CANNOT CONTINUE IN CURRENT MODE INDEFINITELY. WE OBVIOUSLY CANNOT GUARANTEE THAT "RADICALS" (WHATEVER SAUDIS MEAN BY THAT TERM) MIGHT NOT TAKE OVER. HOWEVER, EVEN CHANGE OF CABINET OR, MORE PROBABLY, ITS MILITARIZATION SEEMS UNLIKELY AT PRESENT TO LEAD TO COMMUNIST-INFLUENCED GOVERNMENT. AS FOR ADVISABILITY OF SAUDI AID, FROM ADDIS PERSPECTIVE ANY SUCH AID SEEMS DESIRABLE, PARTICULARLY IN AREAS WHERE IT WOULD COMPLEMENT OURS. WYMAN

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